Circular.

EDUCATION OFFICE,
Toronto, 17th June, 1847.

SIR :

I have the honor to call the attention of the Municipal Council of the Bathurst District to the Circular of the 4th of August, 1846, addressed by the Board of Education to the Municipal Councils of Upper Canada, submitting to the consideration of each Council the propriety and advantage of selecting and aiding one or more meritorious young men from each District to attend a course of Instruction in the contemplated Provincial Normal School for the training of School Teachers. To the Circular referred to, the Honorable Council of the Bathurst District returned a favourable answer. I beg now, at the request of the Board of Education, to offer a few explanatory remarks as to the unforeseen and unavoidable occurrences which have delayed the opening of the Normal School, and the terms on which candidates for School-teaching will be received and instructed.

The delay in opening the Normal School has been occasioned by severe and protracted affliction in the family of the gentleman whom the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland had recommended as the Head Master of the Normal School for Upper Canada—a gentleman who was invited by the National Board from Edinburgh to Dublin, twelve years ago, on account of his superior qualifications and abilities as a Teacher, and who has, for the last twelve years, had the oversight of the Model Schools and the instruction of the Masters-in-training in the *Practice of Teaching* in the great Normal School in Dublin. When the gentleman in question found himself unable, in accordance with the advice of physicians, to remove his family to Canada last autumn, the Board of Education for Upper Canada, in its anxiety to open the Normal School with the least possible delay, offered to pay his passage out and back again—with a view to bring his family to Canada after the close of the first session of the Normal School ; but the illness of his wife was too severe to admit of his absence from home. The month of April was then fixed upon as the period for his removal to Canada ; but, unfortunately, at that time his wife was under the necessity of submitting to a surgical operation which would prevent her removal for several weeks. Under these painful circumstances, the gentleman in question placed his appointment at the disposal of the Canadian Board of Education ; but the Board, unwilling to lose the services of a gentleman so peculiarly qualified for the important task of introducing an improved system of School-teaching into this country, extended the time of his departure for Canada until July. The Board has placed at the disposal of the gentleman selected as Head Master of the Canadian Normal Schools the sum of £400 sterling, to purchase Philosophical Apparatus and Class-Books ; and it is intended that the Institution shall be opened before the middle of Autumn.

The terms on which the Board of Education has finally determined to admit Pupil-teachers to the advantages of the Normal School, are more favourable than those which were intimated in the Circular of the Board above referred to. The following are the Resolutions of the Board, which I have been requested to communicate for the information of the Council over which you have been selected to preside :—

"*Resolved—That*, 1. In consequence of the inability of the Head Master to proceed to Canada, so as to open the Normal School in July next, the opening of the Institution be postponed until as early in Autumn as practicable.

"2. Every Candidate for admission into the School, in order to his being received, must comply with the following conditions :—(1) He must be 16 years of age. (2) He must produce a certificate of good moral character, signed by the Clergyman or Minister of the religious denomination of which he is a member. (3) He must be able to read and write intelligibly, and be acquainted with the simple rules of Arithmetic. (4) He must declare, in writing, that he intends to devote himself to the Profession of Teaching School, and that his object in coming to the Normal School is to qualify himself better for the important duties of that Profession. (Other Students, not Candidates for School-teaching, to be admitted, without signing a document of their intention to become Teachers, on paying the fees and dues to be prescribed.)

"3. Upon the foregoing conditions, Candidates for School-teaching shall be admitted to all the advantages of the Normal School, without any charge either for Tuition, or for the Books which they may be required to use in the School.

"4. The Candidates for School-teaching in the Normal School shall board and lodge in the City, under such regulations as shall, from time to time, be approved by this Board ; and each Pupil (attending the School on his own account) shall be allowed a sum not exceeding *five shillings* per week, towards the expenses of his board.

"5. The Candidates, selected by the District Councils, shall not be charged more than the amount paid for their board in the City.

"6. The foregoing Resolutions be transmitted by Circular to the District Councils for their information, and to the public through the newspapers."

From the foregoing remarks and Resolutions, the Council will perceive that the Board of Education has used every means in their power to bring the Normal School into operation, with as little delay as possible, and upon terms the most favourable to candidates for school-teaching. I venture to hope, that the Council will enable one or more deserving young men to avail themselves, for the public benefit, of the advantages of the Normal School, as suggested in the circular of the Board of Education, 4th August, 1846.

I regret to find, that, in consequence of two restrictive phrases introduced (I know not when or by whom,) into the 8th and 10th sections of the School Act, while under the consideration of the Legislature, the power of the Council is limited, as heretofore, in respect to levying the assessments necessary for the erection of School-houses ; but, I have reason to believe, that this, together with some other defects in the School Act, will be remedied during the present Session of the Legislature, and that the Council will be invested with discretionary power on matters so vital to the interests of Education.

The Council has been heretofore apprized, that the Board of Education has recommended the use of the School Books prepared and published by the National Board of Education in Ireland; also, that the Canadian Board has used means to procure the importation and re-printing of those excellent books at the lowest prices possible. I am happy to be able to state, that Messrs. Eastwood and Company, and Messrs. Brewer, McPhail and Company, of this City, have already got three of this series of books stereotyped, and that several Booksellers have begun to import them at reduced prices. But, in order that the Representatives of the people in the several District Councils might have an opportunity of examining these books for themselves, and, from their own examination, concur with the Board of Education in encouraging the use of them in our Schools, I wrote to the National Board in Dublin, explaining the object I had in view, and requesting to be informed as to the lowest terms on which I could procure, on my own account, twenty-three sets of their School Books—one set for the Council of each District and City in Upper Canada. The noble generosity of the National Board is best expressed in the following extract of a letter from their Secretaries, in reply to my application :—

"Education Office, Dublin,
"1st *May*, 1847.

"Sir,—Having laid before the Commissioners of National Education your letter of the 22nd March last, we are now to inform you that the Commissioners, appreciating your earnest and sincere desire to promote liberal Education in Upper Canada, and also to facilitate the dissemination of the Irish National School Books in that Colony, have great pleasure in presenting you with twenty-five sets of the Publications of this Board, for the important purpose stated in your gratifying communication, free of any charge, except for freight, &c.

"In addition, the Commissioners send for your acceptance twenty-five sets of School-books, not published, but sanctioned by them in the Irish National Schools; also, a complete series of the Annual Reports of the Commissioners, with School Registers, Daily Report Books, Class Rolls, &c., in sets of twenty-five each.

"We enclose a list of the Books, &c., contained in the several parcels. The various packages have been made up in five chests, addressed to you, Education Office, Toronto, and consigned to the Messrs. Elliott, Liverpool, to be shipped for Montreal; the freight and shipping charges will be paid by the Messrs Elliott, and when we receive their account of the same it shall be forwarded to you."

The parcels above referred to have not yet arrived. Each Set consists of upwards of fifty publications, large and small. As soon as they arrive, I shall be happy to present, for the acceptance of the Municipal Council of the Northumberland District, a set of these Books, with a list of their titles and prices. In the meantime, I beg to be informed with whom it will be most agreeable to the wishes of the Council for me to deposit those Books on their arrival. I take the liberty, at the same time, to suggest whether it would not be desirable to place them in charge of the District Superintendent of Common Schools, who would thereby have an opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with them, and with the methods suggested for using them in the Schools, and could beneficially apply the information thus acquired to practical purposes in the discharge of his official duties.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Egerton Ryerson

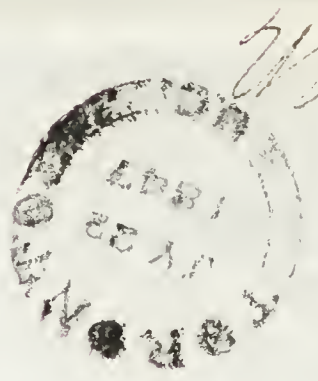
To the Warden of the
Northumberland District
Municipal Council.

No 9 Circular
Letter

Rev. Egerton Ryerson
Chief Supt. of Education

17th June 1847

Relative to the delay in opening
the Normal School



Read 1st Oct. 1847
R. Moffatt
Sec.
Com. on Education